

## CA2302079

Publication Title:

REUSABLE LID WITH DATE INDICATING DEVICE

Abstract:

Abstract of CA2302079

A reusable lid for a food storage container including a device for removably attaching the lid to the container and a resettable date indicating device for indicating a critical date of the contents of the container.

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(12)

(21) 2 302 079

(51) Int. Cl.<sup>7</sup>: **G09F 009/302, B65D 051/24**

(22) 24.03.2000

(30) 09/277,270 US 26.03.1999

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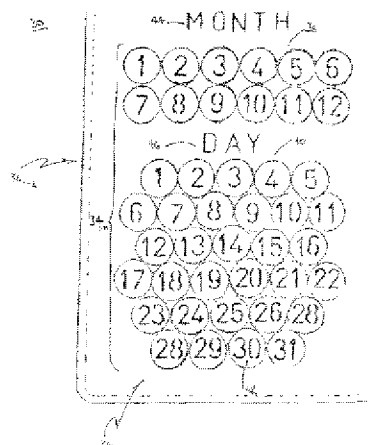
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(54) COUVERCLE REUTILISABLE AVEC INDICATEUR DE DATE

(54) REUSABLE LID WITH DATE INDICATING DEVICE

(57)

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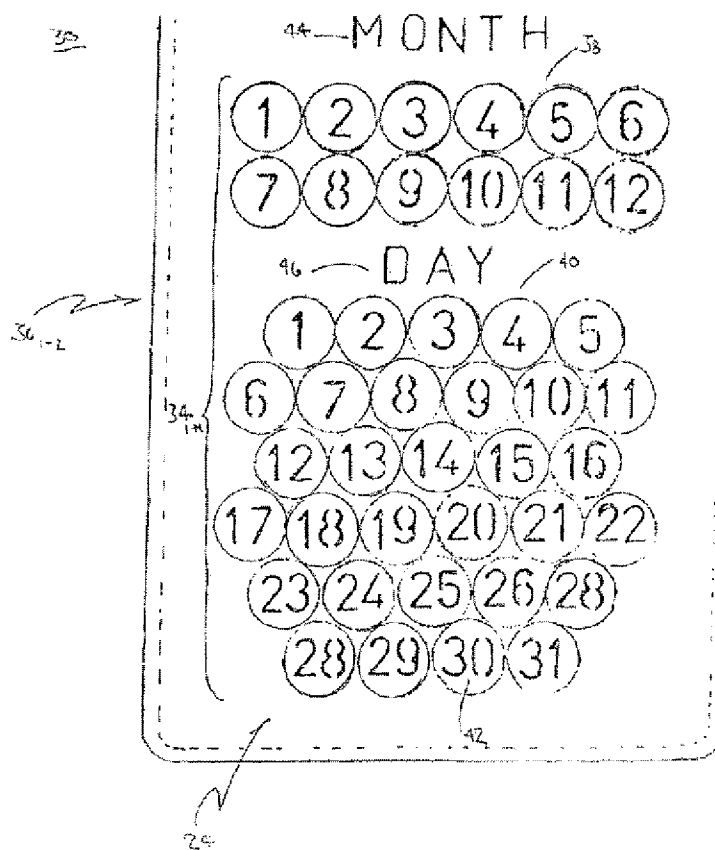
(71) FERRETTI, BRUNO, US

(51) Int. Cl. <sup>7</sup> G09F 9/302, B65D 51/24

(30) 1999/03/26 (09/277,270) US

(54) **COUVERCLE REUTILISABLE AVEC INDICATEUR DE DATE**

(54) **REUSABLE LID WITH DATE INDICATING DEVICE**



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REUSABLE LID WITH DATE INDICATING DEVICE

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ABSTRACT OF DISCLOSURE

A reusable lid for a food storage container including a device for removably attaching the lid to the container and a resettable date indicating device for indicating a critical date of the contents of the container.

## REUSABLE LID WITH DATE INDICATING DEVICE

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FIELD OF INVENTION

This invention relates to a reusable lid for use on a food storage container and more particularly to such a reusable lid which includes a resettable date indicating device.

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BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

Reusable food storage containers have been in use for many years and enable consumers to store leftovers and other food products. One problem associated with these storage containers is that it is difficult to keep track of the date when the food was stored in the container.

15

Since currently available food storage containers do not include any indicator to enable the user to mark the date when the food was placed in the container, quite often these containers are placed into the refrigerator or freezer without any date indication at all. This poses a serious health concern to the consuming public, as the FDA has shown that millions of Americans are stricken by illness every year caused by the food they consume and that approximately nine-thousand (9,000) people a year die of food poisoning. By simply storing food in the food storage container without indicating the date in which the food was placed in the container, there is a possibility that the food in the container will go rancid prior to being consumed. In the event that the food is not spoiled to the point that it is visibly noticeable to the consumer, there is a possibility that

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25 the consumer will eat the spoiled food and become sick and/or die of food poisoning.

Needless to say, this is a very serious health concern.

In an attempt to indicate the date upon which the food in a container was stored, various companies offer "freezer tape", which is essentially tape which can be written upon. This tape is placed on the lid of the food storage container and a storage date is  
5 written on the tape. However, this method is quite inconvenient, as the use of this product requires the consumer to apply the tape to the container (removing any old tape which remains from any previously stored food) and write the food storage date on the freezer tape itself. Further, this tape will only stick to a container that is dry and not overly cold. Additionally, this handwritten date is often blurred and unreadable once  
10 exposed to frost or cold moist air. All these inconveniences add up to a system that is overly burdensome to use and will most likely result in the system not being used.

#### SUMMARY OF INVENTION

It is therefore an object of this invention to provide a reusable lid with date  
15 indicating device which allows for easy indication of the date the food was stored or needs to be disposed of.

It is a further object of this invention to provide such a reusable lid which is low in cost and easy to use.

It is a further object of this invention to provide such a reusable lid which is  
20 totally self contained and does not require any additional products to function.

It is a further object of this invention to provide such a reusable lid which functions regardless of the external condition of lid.

It is a further object of this invention to provide such a reusable lid which is easily

resettable.

This invention results from the realization that a reusable lid with date indicating device can be achieved by incorporating into the lid a date indicating device which allows for easy indication of the critical date of the food stored, where the date indicating device  
5 is easily resettable and functions regardless of the external condition of the lid.

This invention features a reusable lid for a food storage container comprising: means for removably attaching the lid to the container; and a resettable date indicating device for indicating the critical date of the contents of the container.

In a preferred embodiment, the date indicating device includes a plurality of two-  
10 position indicators. Each of the plurality of two-position indicators may be a resettable, indentable dimple. The plurality of resettable, indentable dimples may be arranged into a plurality of groups, where each group indicates a portion of the critical date. The critical date may contain a month portion and a day portion and the plurality of groups may include a first group for indicating the month portion and a second group for indicating  
15 the day portion. The plurality of resettable, indentable dimples may have visual indicia, associated with each dimple, for indicating at least a portion of the critical date. The visual indicia may be located on the plurality of resettable, indentable dimples. The reusable lid may be constructed of plastic.

This invention also features a food storage system comprising: a food storage  
20 container; and a reusable lid, removably attachable to the container, including a resettable date indicating device for indicating the critical date of the contents of the container.

In a preferred embodiment, the date indicating device may include a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples. The plurality of resettable, indentable dimples may

include visual indicia for indicating at least a portion of the critical date.

This invention also features a food storage system comprising: a food storage container; and a reusable lid, removably attachable to the container, including a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples for indicating the critical date of the contents of the container.

This invention also features a reusable lid for a food storage container comprising: means for removably attaching the lid to the container; and a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples for indicating the critical date of the contents of the container.

#### 10                    DISCLOSURE OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Other objects, features and advantages will occur to those skilled in the art from the following description of a preferred embodiment and the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the reusable lid with date indicating device  
15    according to this invention;

FIG. 2 is a more detailed view of the reusable lid with date indicating device according to this invention including a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples; and

FIGS. 3A-3D are a series of plan views showing the manner in which the plurality of resettable, indentable dimples are set and/or reset.

20            In accordance with this invention, the reusable lid 10, Fig. 1, for a food storage container 12 includes means 14 for removably attaching the lid 10 to the container 12. An example of means 14 is a pair 16 and 18 of downwardly extending radial flanges. One of these flanges may include a barb 20 so that when flanges 16 and 18 are slid over



rolled lip 22 of container 12, barb 20 slides under the lower edge 24 of rolled lip 22. This, in turn, would effectively connect and seal lid 10 to container 12. A hinge device 26 may be included to hingedly attach lid 10 to container 12.

Reusable lid 10 includes a resettable date indicating device 24 for indicating a critical date of the contents of the container. This critical date would typically be the date when the stored food was placed into the container, enabling the user to determine how long the food has been stored. However, this critical date need not be the date the food was stored in the container; it could be the date on which the food in the container is to be disposed of.

The date indicating device 24, Fig. 2, of the reusable lid 30 includes a plurality of two-position indicators. Each of these two-position indicators  $34_{1,n}$  is a resettable, indentable dimple, forming a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples. In the normal position, these dimples appear on the lid surface as raised bumps. However, the user can apply a downward force to the dimple to indent it so that the dimple changes state from its normal convex shape to a concave shape.

The plurality of resettable, indentable dimples  $34_{1,n}$  are arranged into a plurality of groups  $36_{1,2}$ , where each group indicates a portion of the critical date. The critical date contains a month portion and a day portion and the plurality of groups  $36_{1,2}$  includes a first group 38 for indicating the month portion of the critical date and second group 40 for indicating the day portion of the critical date. For example, if the food stored in the container was stored on May 26; in group 38, the user would indent button 5 (which indicates May) and, in group 40, the user would indent button 26 (which indicates the 26<sup>th</sup> day). While, in this particular example, the plurality of

groups 36<sub>1-2</sub> is shown to contain only two date groups 38 and 40, this is for illustrative purposes only, as the date indicating device can contain any number of groups. For example, additional groups can be added which correspond to: the year portion of the critical date; the type of food stored in the container (e.g. poultry, beef, fish, liquid);  
 5 etc.

Each of the plurality 34<sub>1-n</sub> of resettable, indentable dimples has visual indicia 42 for indicating at least a portion of the critical date. For example, the indicators in the second group 40, namely those which indicate the day portion of the critical date, would have indicia in the form of numerals 1-31 printed on or around each of the  
 10 plurality 34<sub>1-n</sub> of resettable, indentable dimples. While Fig. 3 shows the indicia printed directly on the dimples, this is for illustrative purposes only, as the indicia could be printed next to the individual dimples. Additionally, group indicia 44 and 46 can be used to indicate the title or type of group 38 and 40.

During use of the reusable lid 30 for a food storage container, each resettable,  
 15 indentable dimple 50, Fig. 3A, initially has a convex shape protruding above the front surface 52 of the reusable lid. When the user applies an inward force 54, Fig. 3B, onto the surface of dimple 50, the dimple is indented into a concave shape. When the user wishes to reset now-concave dimple 50, Fig. 3C, an outward force 56, Fig. 3D, is applied to the backside 58 of the reusable lid so that dimple 50 is restored to its original  
 20 convex shape. This system enables the user to indicate on the lid the critical date of the food being stored (e.g. the date the food was stored). Since the dimples are individually settable and resettable, the system can be reused by the user indefinitely. The reusable lid can be constructed of any resilient material, such as plastic or rubber.

Although specific features of this invention are shown in some drawings and not others, this is for convenience only as each feature may be combined with any or all of the other features in accordance with the invention.

Other embodiments will occur to those skilled in the art and are within the  
5 following claims:

What is claimed is:

is:

1                   1.       A reusable lid for a food storage container comprising:  
2                               means for removably attaching said lid to the container;  
3                               a resettable date indicating device for indicating a critical date of  
4       the contents of the container.

1                   2.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 1 in which  
2       said date indicating device includes a plurality of two-position indicators.

1                   3.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 2 in which  
2       each of said plurality of two-position indicators is a resettable, indentable dimple.

1                   4.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 3 in which  
2       said plurality of resettable, indentable dimples are arranged into a plurality of groups,  
3       wherein each group indicates a portion of said critical date.

1                   5.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 4 in which  
2       said critical date contains a month portion and a day portion and said plurality of groups  
3       includes a first group for indicating said month portion and a second group for indicating  
4       said day portion.

1                   6.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 3 in which  
2       each of said plurality of resettable, indentable dimples has visual indicia, associated with  
3       each said dimple, for indicating at least a portion of said critical date.

1                   7.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 6 in which  
2       said indicia are located on said plurality of resettable, indentable dimples.

1                   8.       The reusable lid for a food storage container of claim 1 in which  
2       said reusable lid is constructed of plastic.

1                   9.     A food storage system comprising:  
2                         a food storage container; and  
3                         a reusable lid, removably attachable to said container, including a  
4     resettable date indicating device for indicating a critical date of the contents of said  
5     container.

1                   10.    The food storage system of claim 9 in which said date indicating  
2     device includes a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples.

1                   11.    The food storage system of claim 10 in which each of said plurality  
2     of resettable, indentable dimples includes visual indicia for indicating at least a portion of  
3     said critical date.

- 1                   12.     A food storage system comprising:
- 2                             a food storage container; and
- 3                             a reusable lid, removably attachable to said container, including a
- 4     plurality of resettable, indentable dimples for indicating a critical date of the contents of
- 5     said container.

- 1                   13.       A reusable lid for a food storage container comprising:
- 2                               means for removably attaching said lid to the container; and
- 3                               a plurality of resettable, indentable dimples for indicating a critical
- 4       date of the contents of the container.



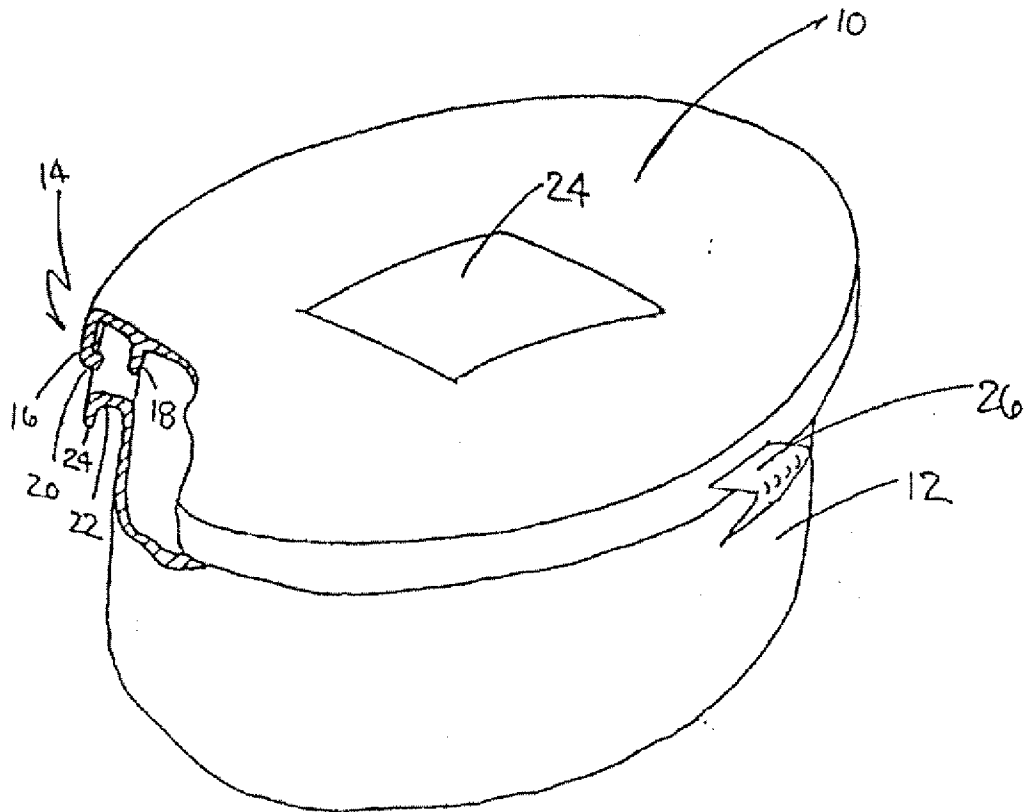


Fig. 1

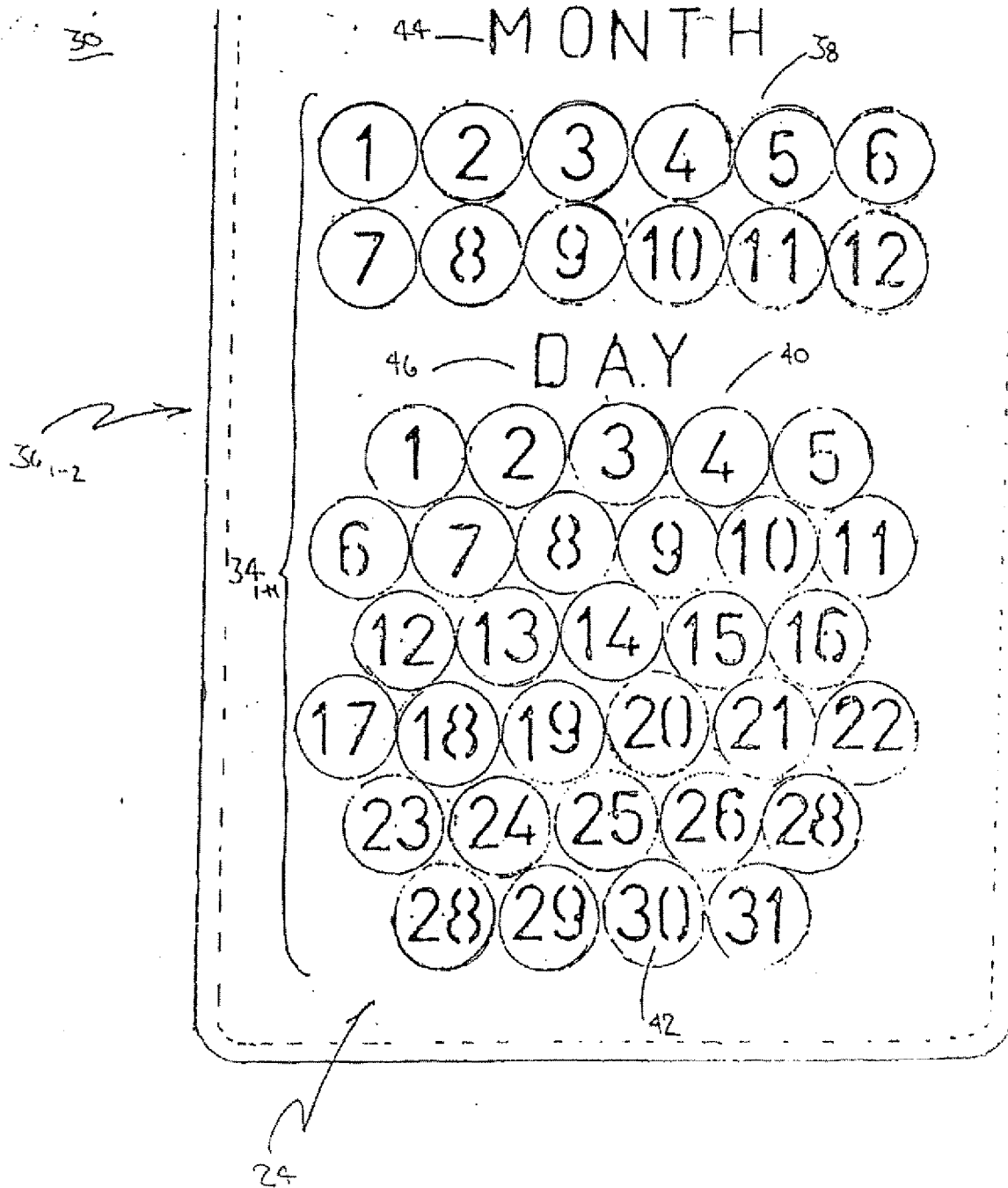
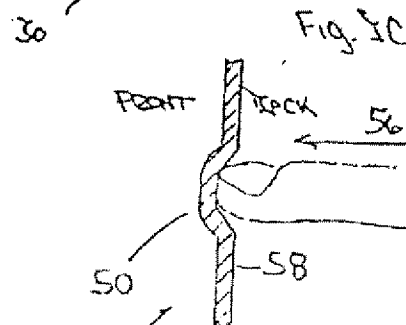
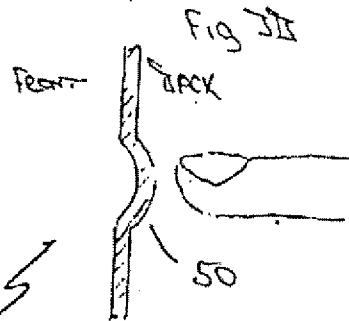
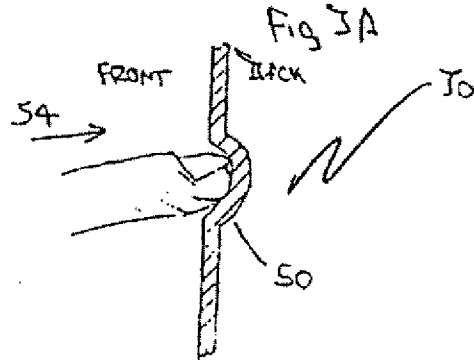
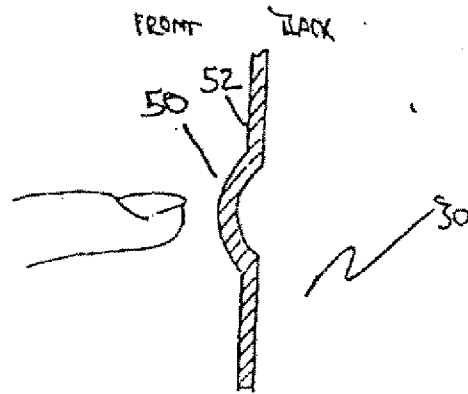


Fig. 2



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